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WHITEHALL

BY

C. DELISLE BURNS

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WHITEHALL

THE WORLD OF TO-DAY

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THE WORLD OF TO-DAY

WHITEHALL

BY

C. DELISLE BURNS

AUTHOR OF

"POLITICAL IDEALS," "GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY," ETC.

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WHITEHALL

CHAPTER I

ADMINISTRATION

WHITEHALL is the name popularly given to the offices of the Central Government in England and to the Civil Servants in those offices who carry on the administration essential to the art of government. The functions performed by this Civil Service and the position of the Service in the life of the political community will be the subject of this book.

There is a general suspicion that Whitehall is full of people who ought not to be there. This is, in part, a survival of the war-time hatred of 'Cuthberts' or what the French called *embusqués*, but it is in part a much older feeling. It arises perhaps out of the popular idea that Civil Servants have nothing to do, or that what they do is a mere interference with ordinary men. Government, indeed, is not loved in England, and officials are not admired, as they are abroad; but whatever the origin of the suspicion of Whitehall, it is generally acknowledged that administration of some kind is necessary. There may, indeed, be too many officials in Whitehall, and they may not be doing what they are paid to do, or they may be doing it badly; but all these are questions subsidiary to the main question as to the *functions of Government offices*. It is that question only which concerns us here.

The Civil Service and Parliament

The existing departments are the result of a long development since the days when the officials whom we now call Civil Servants were, in fact, servants of the King's household—the King's clerks for collecting money, clerks 'of the wardrobe, of armour, shot, and gunpowder,' and secretaries who conveyed the King's orders to his subjects. At present the Civil Service is not paid out of the King's income, but directly by the representatives of the country in Parliament; but it was not until 1848 that the Estimates for these services, presented by the Treasury to Parliament, showed in detail what each service cost, and thus gave to Parliament an opportunity of devising and directing administration. Indeed, the existing system was not established until after the Exchequer and Audit Act of 1866. The present basis of administration, therefore, is comparatively new, although the same sort of work was done by administrative officers long before Parliament attempted to assign the task or control the method of doing it.

The functions of Government Departments are now generally decided by Parliament, although the Members of Parliament and the general public often seem to forget that the decision to have something done involves the appointment of a staff to do it. Policy expressed in an Act of Parliament has to be carried out from day to day; and therefore, when an Act is passed which involves that a department of Government shall perform certain duties, the country is committed to some expenditure. How many Civil Servants are needed for the new work is not, indeed, immediately a matter for Parliament, but for the department concerned and for the Treasury. As will be shown later, however, the control of Parliament over the competence and number of Civil Servants, although indirect, is none the less powerful. Acts differ very much in the amount of administrative work they involve, and therefore in the number of Civil Servants they will employ. For example, a large staff was necessary to

administer the National Insurance Act of 1911; and the Education Act of 1918, in providing that the Board of Education should supervise schemes proposed by the Local Education Authorities, made it necessary that there should be officials to read the schemes presented. On the other hand, the Workmen's Compensation Act, although very important, hardly increased the activities of the Central Administration, since nothing was required of the officials but some recording in the Home Office.[1]

Parliament decides the task to be performed by the departments generally by naming in an Act the department by which it is to be administered; and, indeed, the functions of any department may be most easily discovered in detail by reference to the list of Acts which it administers. Some of the newer departments, however, have been created by Acts which define their new functions, and some by Acts which transfer to them functions hitherto performed by other departments.

The task of the Civil Service is further directed and controlled by Parliament through the Ministers of the Crown, the political heads of the departments, who, as Members of Parliament, are themselves under the influence of criticism and suggestion made in either House. The relation of Parliament to the responsible Ministers, however, will not be discussed here, since the position of the Civil Service in the political community depends rather upon the relation between the officials and their political chief and their relation, mainly through him, to Parliament.

One of the most important functions performed in part by the Civil Service under the Minister and within limits assigned by Parliament is the issue of Rules and Orders. It is true that the power to issue Orders technically rests with the Minister and not with his servants, the officials; and the increase in the number and scope of Rules and Orders is in the main a sign of the increasing

[1] The recommendations of the Committee which recently reported on the Act would involve more administrative action and therefore more staff.—Cmd. 816, 1920.

power of the Executive: but the judgment of administrative officials is, in fact, operative in the decision that such and such an Order is necessary.

Departmental officials are compelled sometimes to suggest action for which Parliamentary sanction is necessary, but for which this sanction cannot be at once obtained. In such a case a Provisional Order is issued by the Minister, assisted by his officials; but such Orders must be confirmed by a Provisional Orders Confirmation Act every session, and if not so confirmed they are invalid. The form of control thus operative seems to have been effective.

The position is different with regard to Statutory Rules and Orders. In this case power is definitely given by an Act of Parliament to a Minister to issue Orders, within the limits defined by the Act; and there has been a tendency in modern legislation to express in the Act itself only general principles, and to leave the application of these principles to the Minister concerned. Either Parliament has no time to legislate on details, or the subject-matter with which the Act deals is so complex that Parliament has neither the knowledge nor the ability necessary for dealing with it in detail. In either case, in addition to extending the powers of the Executive, this system increases the functions of the Civil Service and makes it necessary that officials should be amenable to the expression of popular opinion on matters of detail; for the permanent officials have generally to suggest to the Minister the terms of the Orders required.

Such Orders are controlled by Parliament in two ways. First, the majority of Acts permitting Orders make it necessary that any draft Order should lie on the table of the House for a stated period before becoming operative; and such a draft Order may be objected to or criticized during that period. In practice Members of Parliament do not scrutinize these Orders, and therefore this system of control is largely inoperative, although the possibility of criticism makes the official careful of popular opinion.

Secondly, in the case of Orders transferring functions from one department to another, and of other such important Orders, recent legislation has further provided that these Orders shall not become operative unless approved by positive resolution of Parliament; and this clearly is a much more effective form of control.[1] After the task has been assigned, even in the daily acts of administration Parliament has various ways of making its will or its wishes felt. The officials of every department are influenced by Questions in Parliament; for when some new course is being considered in a department, the staff frequently considers whether it will give rise to Questions, and, if so, how they can be answered. Again, the Public Accounts Committee exercises a continuous supervision over the expenditure of departments, and the political chief of a department has to make good in Committee of Supply what his department has done. For some time, indeed, before the days set aside for Committee of Supply, the higher officials of a department are hard at work collecting and collating the details to be given in the Minister's speech. Finally, exceptional measures are sometimes taken by Parliament, as when, for example, investigations are carried out by a Select Committee on National Expenditure. By all such means Civil Servants are actually controlled by Parliament.

Under the general direction of Parliament and its responsible Minister—that is, under legislative and executive control—the work of Civil Servants is mainly administration. In some cases, as in the Foreign Office, the functions performed even by the permanent officials is perhaps rather negotiation than administration, but the greater number of Civil Servants are clearly instruments

[1] Instances occur under the Ministry of Health Act, etc. Parliament has established a system for control of Special Orders by the persons affected, under the 1901 Factory Act, Section 80, continuing a section of an earlier Act. This provides that if an Order is to be issued, notice must be published, the draft shown on application, and objections taken must be considered. If no change is agreed, then a public inquiry must be held before the Order is issued.

or agents carrying out, with varying degrees of personal responsibility, the directions of their superiors. The process by which the work is done in all the departments was thus described by Lord Haldane in his evidence before the Coal Commission : ' The Minister says, " This has been thought out, and after consultation this is the principle we worked out." He sends for the head of the department, with whom he discusses it and who makes suggestions ; and then, in the shape into which it has grown, the head of the department takes it away. The head of the department, after thinking it over, calls to him two of his sub-heads, and says, " You will take that part and you the other." They have staffs, and the staffs proceed to subdivide it, and the whole thing gets differentiated until there is the most minute work done lower down.' [1] This is largely a description of work on a newly conceived function to be performed ; but the process is similar in regard to the carrying on of the acts of government, through all the changes of political control.

Classification of the Departments

Many theories of government and the sovereign State include astonishing propositions about the majesty of law and the privileges of citizenship ; but these theories seldom condescend to refer to the activities, for example, of the second division clerk in a Whitehall office, and yet such activities are essential to government as we know it to-day. Therefore, without any theorizing as to the nature of the State, an analysis must be given of what actually occurs in Government offices, in so far as this shows what the functions are which Government performs. Men in society have many needs. They require food, clothing, and houses as well as peace and order ; and they may also need what they do not want—for example, education. The supply of these needs is the performance of a social function, and they are supplied

[1] Coal Commission, Minutes of Evidence.—Cmd. 360, col. 1087.

nowadays by many different organizations—companies, banks, universities, and the rest. The State is one of these organizations, providing at present some services in the supply or the supervision of the supply of political, economic, and cultural needs—three kinds of need which may be the basis for our distinction between administrative departments.[1]

The Treasury stands apart as surveying and, in a sense, controlling the activities of the others. It is the oldest of existing departments. It is closest in its relation to the Prime Minister and the Executive generally; and this is natural, because central government costs money, and the Treasury collects and distributes what it costs. Among the other departments it is possible to distinguish three chief types. There are those which embody the oldest functions of government, the maintenance of order, of law internally and of defence externally; and all these may be called, for want of a newer word, purely 'political' departments. They are in England the Home Office, the War Departments, and the Foreign Office; and perhaps with them should be classed the India Office and the Colonial Office. Secondly, there are 'economic' departments, dealing with industry and commerce. They are in England the Board of Trade and the Ministries of Labour, of Agriculture, and of Transport. Thirdly, there are what may be called the departments of social development—the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education. Government, therefore, maintains Law and Order, influences in different ways the supply of food and clothing, and co-ordinates the provisions made for health and mental development.

It is not necessary here to give a complete list of the departments of the Central Government in England; for all the functions at present performed by governmental

[1] The Departments of Law and Justice (Class III, Civil Service Estimates) are not discussed in what follows, but clearly their functions, though not 'administrative,' fall under 'political.' The Revenue Departments, for which Estimates are issued separately, *are* included.

administration can be explained by reference to one of these three groups.[1]

It must be remembered that the administration of central government, which is called Whitehall, forms part of a system of which another important part is formed by administration under local authorities.[2] Whitehall is not a complete system, even as administration. The relation, however, of central to local administration is a basis for a very important distinction between two kinds of department in Whitehall itself. Some of these offices are supplementary to local administration, and therefore have close relations with corresponding offices under local authorities, as, for example, the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education. The local authorities in regard to health and education do as much as central government. Other offices in Whitehall—for example, the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Labour—have no corresponding administration under local authorities ; for even when, as in the case of the Ministry of Labour, there are officers of the department in all localities, these officers are 'Whitehall in the country,' and therefore represent central and not local administration. The distinction may be only an accident of history ; but it may be due to the fact that in regard to health and education, and perhaps police, administration which touches everyday life very intimately is not in Great Britain very highly centralized.

The offices have names of various kinds. They are offices of Secretaries (Home, Foreign, War, Air, Colonial, and India), or of Boards (Treasury, Admiralty, Education),

[1] The departments which existed only for the period of the War will not be dealt with in what follows ; but clearly the Ministries of Food, Shipping, and Munitions were 'economic' departments, and the need for establishing them probably shows that our economic organization had to be readjusted on the same *communal* basis as our political, in the stress of war. See my *Government and Industry*, p. 222 sq.

[2] The opposition to centralization, which certainly led to more competent administration, was very strong in the eighteen-thirties, when the local Poor Law officials were being 'centralized' into insignificance by Chadwick's commissioners.

or of Ministers (Labour, Transport, Agriculture) [1]; but no principle seems to be involved in the differences of title, although the title 'Ministry' is more consonant with existing customs than the title 'Board.' The Board of Agriculture and Fisheries has become the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the Local Government Board was combined with the Insurance Commission to form the Ministry of Health. Each department is in much of its work a separate unit; but there are interdepartmental committees affecting subjects, such as the health of school children, which must be dealt with by more than one office. There is, of course, a co-ordination of governmental action by the Executive; but administrative co-ordination also is increasing and is actually provided for in some cases in recent Acts of Parliament.[2]

Of all the various possible classifications of the departments, the most useful for the present purpose is that based upon the functions performed; and that, therefore, will be adopted in what follows. But all the departments must be viewed together, as one whole, in order to understand the place of administrative officers in the State and in society. The Civil Servants in Whitehall are the agents of the State, and their acts are, therefore, in a sense the acts of 'the people' organized in the State. The functions which they perform are those which popular decision or popular acquiescence has caused to be performed communally, in the name and for the sake of the people as a whole.

[1] The Secretaries of State stand apart from other heads of departments in that they hold in theory one office only, each being interchangeable with the other. If the Home Secretary is away, his work is actually done by one of the other Secretaries of State.

[2] Cf. *Report of Commission on Machinery of Government.*—Cd. 9230, 1918, p. 9.

CHAPTER II

THE TREASURY

The Treasury stands outside the classification of the departments given in the preceding chapter, for its functions affect the whole of the activities of government. It holds, as it were, a central position in the administrative system, and it is intimately related to all the other departments. This, however, does not mean that the Treasury is superior to other departments; for in the British system each department is a complete whole, organized as an independent unit for the performance of its particular function. The Treasury has only a general and very limited power of co-ordination and supervision.

Since 1919 the work of the Treasury has been divided between three chief sections known as departments, under Controllers who are directly subordinate to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Parliamentary Financial Secretary. The Department of the Controller of Establishments deals with the staffs of Government departments and kindred subjects, the Department of Supply Services deals with other financial business of the departments, the Department of Finance deals with Treasury financial business, which is described more at length below.

In close connexion with the Treasury are: (1) the small office of the Parliamentary Counsel, for drafting Bills for Parliament, (2) the Treasury Remembrancer in Scotland and the Treasury in Ireland, (3) the Paymaster-General's Office, (4) the Stationery Office, and (5) the almost entirely separate Post Office. The Minister responsible for the Treasury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has also a close relation to the two independent Statutory Boards of Commissioners—the Board of Customs and Excise and the Board of Inland Revenue. The Commissioners of these Boards are paid

officials. Those departments which are not directly connected with finance may be dealt with first, and the ordinary procedure in regard to the State's income described afterwards. The connexion of the Stationery Office with the Treasury is very slight, and is largely dependent upon the fact that the Parliamentary chiefs of the Treasury answer for the Stationery Office in Parliament. The Controller of the Stationery Office, a paid official, and his staff superintend the printing for Government offices and for Parliament, and the Controller holds the copyright of all official publications. This, therefore, is a department of economic or industrial supplies, which does for the State a part of the industrial work or 'business' involved in the carrying on of government.

The function of the Office of Works has a similar relation to the needs of government; but this office has a Parliamentary head, the Chief Commissioner, without any special connexion with the Treasury. The chief function of the Office is the superintendence of the buildings required by the departments of the Central Government.

The Post Office is connected with the Treasury, and yet it has an independent Parliamentary chief, the Postmaster-General; its connexion is marked by the fact that the Accountant-General of the Post Office is appointed by the Chancellor and the Postmaster-General jointly. But the essential connexion lies in the fact that the Post Office is regarded as a source of revenue for the Exchequer. The function of the Office is clearly the provision of means of communication by post, telegraph, and telephone, a function the control of which by Government was felt to be necessary in very early times. The Civil Service, then, in the Post Office performs a function distinct in character from that of other departments of Central Government, since it is the only instance in Great Britain of a business enterprise carried on by the State itself.

The Function of the Treasury

The Treasury controls the income and expenditure of the State under the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act, 1866, and the Public Accounts and Charges Act, 1891. All the State's income, except 'appropriations in aid,' is paid into 'the account of the Exchequer' at the Bank of England by the Treasury, which has to supervise the collection of this income from all its various sources. The collecting officials, subordinate to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, are: (1) the Commissioners of Customs and (2) the Commissioners of Inland Revenue. In earlier times most of the work would have fallen to the Customs; but under 'free trade' customs duties do not provide as much as is collected by the Inland Revenue officials. It is unnecessary to describe in detail how these officials collect (*a*) the excise on beer and spirits, (*b*) the income tax, and (*c*) the death duties; for most citizens have an intimate experience of the process, and although they may not like it they can generally be persuaded to admit that money must be raised somehow if the services of government are to be performed. The officials who collect are not nowadays regarded as levying tribute for their own caste, since they carry out the decisions of the representatives of those who pay the taxes. Their collection of the State's income is closely connected with the work of the Treasury, but the offices for collecting revenue are separate establishments not in Whitehall.

Owing to an historical accident, the Post Office is treated as one among the Revenue Departments, and the surplus derived from the charges it makes for its services is used by the Treasury, together with the income from taxation. This is in many ways unfortunate, and, of course, it involves the payment for Army, Navy, and other public services by those who send letters and telegrams. As things now stand, however, the Post Office is expected to raise revenue for the Treasury.

The Treasury is also the office for paying the expenses

of the services which the country desires. Before the War it was the usual practice to collect each year almost exactly the amount required for payment for the services of the year; and therefore normally there was no great surplus, although there could not be any great deficit. It follows, however, as a result of this method that if the year is not normal—for example, if State services increase owing to war—the collecting of income must be very much increased. Thus the amount of work to be done and the number of persons required to do it varies in the different years in proportion to the amount of income to be collected for the State. The expenditure of the State is decided by Parliament, but the process of paying it out is an act of administration which is performed by the Treasury in two ways. There are some expenses of government which are regarded as generally outside the field of political controversy. These are (*a*) the Civil List or payments to the King and certain other servants of the people, and (*b*) interest on the National Debt. For making these payments the Treasury asks the Comptroller and Auditor-General to grant credits from the Bank of England; but for the payment for other services the King issues an Order which two Commissioners of the Treasury must countersign, and the Auditor-General [1] then grants credits at the Bank if he thinks that Parliament has given authority for the order. The actual payments, like the collections of revenue, are made by sub-departments such as that of the Paymaster-General; but in expending or in collecting the State's income the officials of the Treasury control and direct.

Another important duty of the Treasury is to prepare accounts. Every year such accounts are laid before Parliament, relating to the finance of the preceding year. Again, the Budget proposed and the Estimates given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer require careful preparation, which is one of the normal duties of the Civil

[1] The Auditor-General is an official of Parliament who is independent of the Executive of the day and reports directly to Parliament.

Service in the Treasury. It is necessary to review the resources of the State and estimate its expenditure in order to carry out any political programme, and this function is performed by the Civil Service in the Treasury and subordinate and connected departments.

Finally, the Treasury officials are concerned with many of the details of expenditure in the other departments; for although Parliament decides what amount each department may have from the Treasury, it is not possible for the departments to appoint permanent officials to new posts without the sanction of the Treasury. This is due partly to actual provisions in Acts of Parliament, partly to custom; and with this power is connected what is called 'Treasury control.' Clearly the 'control' here referred to is not the expression of a policy, since the officials of the Civil Service receive directions as to 'policy' from Parliament only; but there may be many opinions as to the best method of carrying out a given policy, and a department generally has to make good to the Treasury its own view of the number of officials needed and its other requirements involving expenditure. Within every department there is one official, the Accounting Officer, whose appointment must be made by the Treasury; and all new organization of a department involves a reference to the Treasury.[1] Thus, in a sense the officials of the Treasury have a unique co-ordinating power within the administrative machine. In practice, however, a department can generally, through its political chief, obtain from the Treasury large amounts; while the Treasury tends to question the payment of small sums, for demanding which a department can hardly use its 'big guns.' It sometimes

[1] Fourth Report of Com. of Public Accounts, December 9, 1920, H.C. 231, para. 9. 'The position of Accounting Officers is the foundation of the financial system of the country, so far as departmental control over expenditure is concerned.' The Accounting Officer may be called before the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament, and if the Minister orders a new expenditure the Accounting Officer may require the Minister to sign the Order for the better protection of his own responsibility.

happens, therefore, that a new policy involving a higher staff is permitted, while the expenditure on minor officials to make the policy effective is refused. The tendency to large expenditure by the departments, however, is partly a war phenomenon ; and at present the Treasury, under a new system, is in very close touch with the detailed work of the whole Civil Service.

The Cabinet Secretariat

Before the War the Treasury, in its supervision of the estimates of the departments, was the only instance of a department in continuous contact with all the others ; and the Cabinet or the Executive had no permanent office. A new office, however, has recently been established as a means of communicating the decisions of the Cabinet to the departments. The office of the War Cabinet during the War provided for the obvious need of continuity in the action of the Executive. In the old days the Cabinet, being originally an informal and also extra-constitutional body, kept no formal records of its discussions or its decisions ; but it was found necessary during the War to keep Ministers informed of the action of other Ministers and to put upon record all decisions taken. The War Cabinet, therefore, created a Secretariat for itself, and this has been continued in the Office of the Cabinet. It is a small office in Whitehall, but its function is important ; and it is an interesting evidence of the fact that administration by political amateurs, however traditionally British, needs permanent official machinery to make it effective. In modern times it is recognized that experts have their place in administration and that the complex organization of the modern State needs co-ordination of many kinds. The officials of the Cabinet Office arrange the agenda of subjects as they ripen for Cabinet discussion, in direct touch with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House of Commons. The officials have also to act as secretaries for the two permanent Cabinet Committees—the Com-

mittee of Home Affairs and the Finance Committee—and for other *ad hoc* committees formed with varying personnel as occasion requires. Thus the Cabinet Office forms a new system of administrative co-ordination.

Central government, seen as a whole from the point of view of the Treasury and the Cabinet Office, appears as an organization including distinct groups of departments. Each group has within it offices closely related, because of the similarity of their functions ; and there is, therefore, a closer connexion between some departments than between those of separate groups. Thus the War Departments form obviously one group, the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Labour belong to another group, and the Ministry of Health and Board of Education to another. Upon this grouping will be based the further analysis of the functions of the departments, but all are similarly related to the Cabinet Office and to the Treasury.

CHAPTER III

THE HOME OFFICE, COLONIAL OFFICE, AND INDIA OFFICE

The King's Peace and the *Pax Britannica* are old names for what has always been supposed to be the first purpose of government. Law and Order are generally thought to be embodied in the State ; and although we have become accustomed to going about in comparative safety and therefore take Order for granted, the organization of the relations of men according to Law has to be maintained by administration. There must be some recognition of the citizenship and civil rights of individuals and some method of admitting new citizens to such rights. The making of law and the problems of the application of the law to particular cases through the judicature are outside our purview here ; and therefore Parliament, Local Councils, and the various forms of Courts, with their

departmental offices, may be omitted; but besides the work done by these, supervision and organization of the system for maintaining order is also necessary, and this is done in Whitehall by the Home Office. The Office of the Home Secretary is historically the most important of the administrative offices. It has been very intimately connected with the King as the Chief Executive, and it has in the past performed many different functions for which special offices have been developed at later dates. It has therefore been, as it were, a source from which a great part of our present Civil Service has sprung, and it still stands for the maintenance of that fundamental relationship of King and subject which makes the State.

The officials of the Home Office, however, deal directly with the inhabitants of the United Kingdom only, and the King has other subjects. The United Kingdom is not a complete administrative whole, because Whitehall affects the government of all parts of the British Empire. The offices which organize the *Pax Britannica*, in so far as it is organized from a single centre, are the Colonial Office and the India Office, although obviously these two perform many other functions besides those of a Home Office.

The Home Office

The Home Office is a comparatively small department. Its staff in August 1914 was only 283, and although in 1918 its numbers had increased, owing to the pressure of work connected with aliens and prisoners of war, the numbers were only about 500 even then. The characteristic functions of the Civil Service in the Home Office may, in the most general terms, be described as the organization of 'law and order,' but there have been and still are some exceptions to this.

The Factory Department, for example, deals with industrial organization. It is a late addition to the Home Office, dating from about 1833, and its functions are not now conceived to be similar to those of a police

force. If one of the functions of modern government is to express an industrial policy, it is unfortunate that the Factory Department should be connected with an office whose chief functions are non-industrial; and for the purpose of the present description, it will be more reasonable to discuss the action of the Factory Department when the 'economic' functions of the Civil Service are described.[1] The old Mines Department of the Home Office also was not a police department, but this has been already transferred to the Board of Trade.

The Home Office administers a very miscellaneous group of Acts, which have little to connect them except the conception of 'law and order'; and the division between the sections of the Office seems to be based mainly upon administrative convenience. A large number of Acts may involve very little work for Civil Servants, whereas the carrying out of one Act may employ many officials; and this will explain why some divisions of an office have only a few and other divisions have many various functions. This, however, can hardly be held to justify confusion; for if Civil Servants are to be more than passive, irresponsible instruments of the orders of a Minister or the 'will of the people,' they must be experts, and, therefore, should develop action on a connected plan; but this is impossible in the distracted opportunism of a too varied collection of functions.

As it now stands, one section of the Home Office deals with naturalization and aliens, together with the licensing laws for the liquor traffic. A second section deals with prisons and prisoners, appointments of justices' clerks and clerks of the peace, and some of the administration consequent upon criminal proceedings. The police forces of counties and boroughs are co-ordinated by the same section, and its officials deal with the governmental correspondence or take action relating to riots, extradition, and the King's prerogative of mercy. A third section of the Office deals with Juvenile Courts, the White Slave Traffic, and obscene publications. All

[1] See below, p. 42.

the functions so far named are obviously parts of the activities of the State as the source of social order. They are 'political' activities in the restricted sense of that word; and they are usually conceived to be 'government' in its essence. Therefore the officials of the Home Office may be said to be in a very special sense 'the State,' if what is most universal among the functions of government be regarded as what is essential to the State.

In addition to the sections already mentioned, the Home Office includes another section, which has some police functions, for example, in supervising the Metropolitan Police[1]; but the same section is largely concerned with forms and ceremonies connected with the approach of subjects to the King. The same section also deals with burials and the protection of wild birds; and, in addition, communicates with the Governments of the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, which are neither colonies nor parts of the United Kingdom. In this section the Home Office is a Secretariat to the King, in the older meaning of that term, and it performs many functions which happen to have no very obvious other place in the administration. Hence it has been called 'a residuary legatee' among departments.

The functions of the Home Office, excluding those of the Factory Department, are therefore mainly those of a Ministry of Justice. It is concerned with the claims and privileges and burdens of citizenship as membership of the political community, and it is now responsible for the registering of electors and supervising elections. Its relation to the maintenance of order by the police and the courts, and its relation to the approach of subjects to the King, both arise from the fundamental need for centralization in these matters.

[1] It should be noted that Scotland Yard is not a division of the Home Office; and although the Home Secretary answers Questions in Parliament in regard to such matters, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police is not directly his subordinate. Connected with this Police Department is a Secret Service.

Scottish and Irish Offices

Under this head, before proceeding to discuss functions having reference outside the United Kingdom, it should be noted that the Central Government in Whitehall includes offices which connect it with Scotland and Ireland. These countries have in part their own administration, but there are included in 'Whitehall' (1) for Scotland, the Office of the Secretary for Scotland and of the Scottish Education Department, and (2) for Ireland, the London Office of the Chief Secretary for Ireland. These provide the connexion between the Central Government and the separate administrative offices of Scotland and Ireland. The chief part, however, of the administration in the two countries is carried out by separate Departments, or by sections of such United Kingdom Departments as the Board of Trade and the Post Office in those countries.

The Colonial Office

The administration of the British Government outside the United Kingdom is organized centrally by the Colonial Office and the India Office, both of which reflect in their organization the intricate, and in some cases indefinable, relations between the various parts of the British Empire. The Colonial Office came into existence in 1854. Before that time its duties were performed by the War Office; but when the Crimean War broke out it was thought necessary to relieve the War Office of the supervision of colonial affairs. Before 1801, similar duties in regard to the Colonies had been performed by the Home Office which, as has been shown above, is the general Secretariat out of which many new offices have developed. The constitutional relation of the government of the United Kingdom to the Government of colonies and dependencies is outside the purview of this book, but summarily it may be said that the work of officials in the Colonial Office is directive, where the dependencies have

little freedom for self-government, and consultative or merely informative in regard to the self-governing Dominions. The Colonial Office is, therefore, divided into two main sections, (*a*) the Dominions Division, and (*b*) the Crown Colonies Division. The former has functions similar to those of a foreign office, except for the very important fact that in each Dominion is a Governor-General appointed by the King through the Colonial Secretary. The Colonial Secretary has, however, recently begun to communicate directly with the Prime Minister of each Dominion, as well as through the Governor-General. The problem of administration is not yet solved, and the new status of the great self-governing Dominions may in the near future considerably modify the present structure of the Colonial Office. The officials of the Dominions Division of the Colonial Office are chiefly concerned with the correspondence arising out of the delicate and indefinable relations of the British Parliament and the Parliaments of the self-governing Dominions; but the Crown Colonies Division has a more obviously administrative task. It is divided into geographical sub-sections under two main heads, (1) Africa and the Mediterranean, (2) the West and East Indies. The Governors of the so-called 'Colonies' issue ordinances which are sometimes affected by the advice or criticism of a local body with some representative element. Ordinances of prime importance are directly supervised, before they are issued, in Whitehall; and other ordinances, although not issued under the direct supervision of the Colonial Office, may be abrogated by the Colonial Secretary. Apart from the supervision of ordinances, the main work of the Colonial Office is a continual correspondence with all parts of the Empire, in which the Office provides advice, control, and co-ordination of the legal and administrative systems.

The Colonial Office is also the administrative machine which keeps the various parts of the British Empire, with the exception of India, in touch governmentally one with another. It provides facilities for periodic meetings of

the Imperial Conference; and clearly, if any new form of government were devised for making closer or more effective the relations of the parts of the Empire, the Colonial Office would naturally develop the functions of a central office for what might in effect be a form of federal commonwealth. At present, however, the duties of its officers seem to lie in that vague region somewhere between the functions of a Foreign Office and those of a Cabinet Secretariat; for some parts of the Empire are equals of the United Kingdom, and others are ruled from London.

A new department of the Colonial Office, the Middle East Department, has recently been formed in order to supervise the British connexions of the administration in Mesopotamia and Palestine.

The India Office

In addition to the persons governed through the Offices so far named, there is within the British system of government the vast and various population which inhabits India, the government of which also is partly organized in Whitehall. The India Office is of about the same date as the Colonial Office. It was established in 1858, when the British Government took over the Government of India from the East India Company. India had always till then been governed mainly by the British actually in India, and this has been continued; but the officials in Whitehall provide the link between the Government of India and the Cabinet of the United Kingdom. The new Government of India Act, 1919, amending the Act of 1915–1916, makes some difference to the division of functions between the India Office and the government in India, but wherever in these Acts the Secretary of State for India is given a task, it is implied that the India Office has to be his instrument. The old division of the India Office, dealing with stores, supplies, and some forms of pensions, has now been given

the position of the Office of a High Commissioner of a self-governing Dominion ; and that part of the work is, therefore, no longer paid for by the British taxpayer.[1] The rest of the work, paid for in the main by the British Treasury, is divided among sections of the India Office which reflect or express all the chief functions of British government. In the India Office, therefore, roughly corresponding to the Treasury, War Departments, Foreign Office, Home Office, Board of Education, Board of Trade and Office of Works, are small sections dealing with (1) Finance, (2) Military affairs, (3) Political and 'Secret' matters, (4) Judicial and Public matters, (5) Revenue and Statistics, and (6) Public Works ; but of course the India Office reflects not so much the departments of Whitehall as the departments of government and their functions in India. India is an empire in itself, and the functions of government there involve the organization of large revenues, the continual intercourse with part-sovereign native States, the manipulation of armed forces, the administration of law, and the development of natural resources, industry, and commerce. In the new Government of India Act, however, it is said that the Secretary of State 'may superintend, direct and control all the acts, operations and concerns which relate to the government or revenues of India' ; and it will be understood, therefore, that the functions of the India Office are varied, but not detailed, since the actual details of administration are carried out in India. All acts involving general policy, however, are reviewed at the India Office, and the officials there, who are directly the servants of Parliament through the Secretary of State, provide the material for criticism and control, and carry on the correspondence through which it is made effectual.

[1] Act of 1919, Section 35.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR AND FOREIGN DEPARTMENTS

A GROUP of departments in Whitehall does work which arises out of the contact of British with foreign governments. It cannot be too often repeated that government is not essentially British, and that the existence of many independent States affects the character and influences the action of the government of each State, although the people of each State seem still to imagine that government is mainly a domestic affair with occasional and rather unfortunate relations to foreigners. The offices in every State which arise from the contact of peoples are (1) the War Departments and (2) the Foreign Offices; and in Great Britain the War Departments are, at present, the War Office, the Admiralty, and the Ministry of Air. With these must be classed the Ministry of Pensions.

It is perhaps unnecessary to explain in detail what Whitehall is doing in the War Departments. All states maintain armies, navies, and now an air force; and armies and navies obviously need supplies and the co-ordination of effort which, in modern times, involves a central office, including some officials who are not members of the armed forces. The officials in Whitehall, then, in the War Office and the Admiralty, are performing the governmental functions of organizing 'defence.' The work is partly civilian, and does not essentially differ from any other work in an office, although it is directed towards the maintenance and development of war forces.

Before there was an army or a navy, there were servants of the King's household to organize the upkeep of supplies of arms and rope and sails. The men of an army, the ships and men of a navy, might be raised as occasion demanded; but it was found necessary even in the fourteenth century to keep a permanent store of 'munitions of war'; and there are records referring to

of the War Office, and the issue of reports. The Finance Department prepares the Estimates, reviews proposals for new expenditure, audits accounts, and administers the Army Pay Department. The other sections of the War Office—the departments of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, of the Adjutant-General, of the Quartermaster-General, and of the Master-General of the Ordnance are staffed chiefly by members of the army.

The Air Ministry

The Ministry of the Air was established in 1917, and now forms the third of the War Departments. Its organization is based upon the same principles as those referred to above, but as it is a comparatively small department, there is much less civilian work to be done by it. The departments of the Secretary and of Finance are chiefly civilian in character. The whole Department is under an Air Council established by Section 8 of the Air Force Act of 1917, which has a President who is also a sixth Secretary of State.

Imperial Defence

It has been suggested, both unofficially and by official committees, that all the war departments should be co-ordinated as a single organization for national defence. This is largely a problem of executive government, or of military and naval strategy; but so far as administration is concerned, a centralization of all the administrative work of the Army, Navy, and Air Force would probably involve too cumbrous an office organization. An office which supervises too much tends to delay, and the existing war departments are already vast. Without, however, going so far as to establish a single Defence Ministry, co-ordination was achieved by the Committee of Imperial Defence, which made some preparation for the recent war. The staff of the Committee is a small one, and its work largely depends upon the general policy now co-ordinated by the Cabinet Secretariat.

The Ministry of Pensions

An Act of 1592 declares that 'it is agreeable with Christian charity, policy, and the honour of our nation' that men disabled in the defence of the State 'should be relieved and rewarded.' Pensions were then derived from local rates; but at a later date the War Office and Admiralty included sections which distributed pensions out of the funds of the State; and this function, therefore, is part of the functions of the War Departments. The Ministry of Pensions was established by the Ministry of Pensions Act, 1916, to take over the payment of pensions for death and disability hitherto made by the War Office and the Admiralty. It is, therefore, a 'war' department, for it has no functions in regard to long service pensions, old age or Civil Service pensions. The central office has chiefly the function of controlling and supervising the awards and payments made throughout the Kingdom through eleven Regional Offices, but payments to officers and widows, pensioners living abroad, and other small classes of applicants are also dealt with by the central office. The main divisions of the central office are: (1) Administrative, (2) Medical, and (3) Financial, together with (4) the Section dealing with the special classes just mentioned. The Pensions Issue Office, at which about 5,700 persons are employed, may also be considered part of the central organization. About three and a half million men, women, and children receive pensions or allowances through the Ministry; and the treatment of about 130,000 disabled men is also organized by the Ministry under the War Pensions (Transfer of Powers) Act, 1917. The expenditure thus dealt with amounts to about £120,000,000 a year, and the whole organization for this service, including payment to medical men, amounts to about £5,000,000 a year.

It is outside the province of this book to describe the decentralized work of the Ministry; but it is essential for the understanding of the work of the central office to recognize that the great majority of claims and awards

are dealt with by the eleven Regional Offices, each with separate sections for awards, medical services, local committees administration, and finance, together with a registry. These Regional Offices again receive claims and are connected with local War Pensions Committees, of which the members, representative of various interests, are appointed by the Minister of Pensions.[1] The War Pensions Committees used to distribute funds provided by Parliament; but a new Act (1921) makes them advisory, and therefore makes the Ministry of Pensions more completely responsible. It follows that one of the chief functions of the central office is financial, which is the work of the division of the Accounting Officer—the Financial Assistant Secretary. His office must scrutinize all new charges and, on the accounts side, examine all departmental payments. The Medical Services Division of the central office is sub-divided into sections dealing with medical boards, medical officers and nurses, treatment and training, hospitals, and artificial limbs and surgical appliances.

The functions of the Administrative Division are largely concerned with questions of general policy; and in this connexion it is worth noting that special provision is made for appeals against decisions of the Ministry to one of the thirteen Statutory Appeals Tribunals. As an addition to the organization of the central office there is a Special Grants Committee, with a small staff of its own, whose function it is to grant supplementary assistance to various classes.

The Foreign Office

The Foreign Office is peculiar among the departments, in being originally concerned with the representation in regard to other States of all the functions of the British

[1] War Pensions Committees were established by the War Pensions Act, 1915. Section 4 makes them agents of the Statutory Committee, whose place is now taken by the Ministry of Pensions and the Special Grants Committee. Cf. Report on Ministryof Pensions, 1921, and Third Report of the Minister of Pensions, H.C, 35, 1921.

State taken as a whole. It was once a medium of communication for all departments which come into contact with foreign countries, but various departments in modern times tend to enter into communication directly with corresponding departments of foreign governments. The Foreign Office thus introduces the Education or Labour Departments to Foreign Governments; but it does not directly provide information on education and labour.

It is not necessary here to discuss the control of foreign policy, since our main interest is not the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, but the officials. The peculiar function, however, of the Foreign Office makes the work of all the officials more delicate and even dangerous for the State than is the case in most departments; and the result is that nearly all the work has to go through the hands or proceed under the eyes of the superior ranks in the office. The proportion of higher officials in the Foreign Office is, therefore, somewhat larger than in other departments.

The Foreign Office reviews and collects information about foreign countries, which is primarily used for the guidance of the Government. There is no reason why the general public should not be given similar information by the Foreign Office, and, indeed, even at present the texts of some treaties are issued in a Treaty Series; but the Foreign Office, like other government departments, does not yet aim at giving full and free information, although this would be one of the first necessities if administration were democratic.

In the stress of war the Foreign Office included persons other than the older type, who formed what was called a political intelligence division, and who received their information not only from ambassadors and attachés. During that time the Foreign Office collected some information on 'labour' matters abroad, matters not commonly known to ambassadors of the usual kind; but the older system of organizing the supply and collation of information has been re-established since the war, and now, therefore, all information specially intended for

the Government comes through the usual diplomatic channels.

The officials of the Foreign Office have, further, to keep up a continual correspondence with foreign governments in reference to British interests. The normal contact between modern governments is intricate and varied; and owing to the increased speed and ease of communication, less is left to representatives abroad. Again, the tendency to hold special Conferences of Prime Ministers makes for a new 'diplomacy by Conference' [1]; and the existence of the League of Nations Office and the International Labour Office at Geneva undoubtedly affects all Foreign Offices. It remains true, however, that the Foreign Office is the normal point of contact between sovereign States.

At the Foreign Office, therefore, all the various international relationships of the British Empire are centralized. When 'relations are strained,' the public hear of foreign affairs; but perhaps the most valuable part of the work of the Foreign Office officials is the normal and continuous maintenance and development of the community of governments which, in international law, is known as the comity of nations.

The whole state system of the world operates nowadays chiefly through telegraphy. The mediaeval method of sending 'King's messengers' still survives for certain purposes, and the nineteenth-century method of sending letters or sealed bags of documents through the post also survives, especially in order to carry confirmation of messages sent by telegraph; but, in the main, information from and guidance to our representatives abroad is sent by telegraph. Therefore the officials of the Foreign Office are concerned every day with an inflow and an outgoing of telegrams which becomes very frequent when the diplomatic situation in any corner of the world becomes difficult. Thus, when in 1905, Norway separated from Sweden, the situation very much increased the work of our own foreign services at home and abroad.

[1] Cf. *Round Table* (March 1921), 'Diplomacy by Conference.'

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In addition to the work of communication with our representatives abroad, the officials of the Foreign Offices are in continual touch with the members of foreign embassies in London ; and, of course, an immense amount of all this work must necessarily be unnoticed and perhaps necessarily unknown to the general public. The work of Whitehall, however, in relation to foreign affairs is most valuable in this unnoticed current of contacts in the relation of peoples and governments.

The organization of the Foreign Office is mainly based upon the division of countries, and not upon the distinction between the functions of government or the distinction between the subject-matters dealt with. Thus each section of the Foreign Office is concerned with the correspondence and general policy arising out of British relations with different parts of the world. The officials in the old days were not persons with experience of life in the countries they dealt with ; and on the other hand our representatives abroad were generally without experience of the central organization in the Foreign Office. The Royal Commission on the Civil Service, however, recommended that an interchange should be effected between Foreign Office officials and the staffs of embassies and legations ; and this recommendation is apparently being carried out.[1]

For some time during the nineteenth century the Foreign Office was concerned very largely with trade problems, and therefore the Consular service as well as the Diplomatic were co-ordinated and controlled by it. The Board of Trade, however, always had a special interest in foreign trade, and therefore used to control in part the system of commercial treaties. The result has been the recent establishment of a new department amalgamating the functions of the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade in regard to foreign trade. This is the Department of Overseas Trade. It is an ' economic ' depart-

[1] Cd. 7748, 1915 ; on the Foreign Services. See also the chapter on ' Diplomacy ' in my *International Politics*, where some statements in regard to reform are quoted.

ment ; but in it Government is concerned with contacts with foreign states and peoples. The D.O.T. is, therefore, part of an international organization of the relations of States. Its purpose seems to be to assist by information and advice all British commerce overseas ; for it is supplementary to the existing commercial and financial organization, and it has taken over the control and supervision of the Consular Services.

Thus Whitehall in the War and Foreign Departments is part of an international system. In the War Departments the international system is based upon the old principles of a balance of power and the non-political methods of contending forces ; but in the Foreign Office and the Department of Overseas Trade there may be the beginning of the international organization of peace.

CHAPTER V

THE ECONOMIC DEPARTMENTS

Where Government touches industry and commerce most intimately, there Whitehall is usually most unpopular. The Board of Trade, the Ministry of Labour, the Factory Department of the Home Office, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries are the subject of greater controversy than are the 'law and order' Departments or the Defence Departments, for it is felt that the 'economic' departments can be contrasted with, and sometimes opposed to, the economic organization of industry and commerce which is not governmental. Economic departments assist and supplement the commercial and industrial organization for the supply and distribution of commodities.

The Board of Trade

The Board of Trade is, in the first place, an organization for the collection and dissemination of commercial

information. It publishes statistics of import and export, trade and navigation, and thus provides a sort of barometer of the economic situation in its commercial aspects. The newspapers occasionally refer to this barometer, but normally the general public is unaware of Board of Trade information. Practical business men, on the other hand, appear to use this information only as a very general guide, and partly for this reason complaints are often made that the information is inadequate or irrelevant. The largest commercial firms now have their own systems of obtaining information as to markets and trade fluctuation, and institutions such as the Federation of British Industries now supply non-governmental services of the kind which used to be considered the function of the Board of Trade. Government, however, in the Board of Trade is generally thought to be of assistance to trade and industry; and there are indications—for example in debates in Parliament—that the Board of Trade is supposed by some to 'push' British trade and to assist the sale of British goods in rivalry with those of foreigners. What, then, is the true function of Government as a source of commercial information? Clearly Government cannot 'tout' for orders on behalf of private traders; for, if it does, it becomes an agent of one person or group and not of the whole community which pays for it. The idea that the whole community necessarily benefits if Mr. Smith sells his cotton-goods to Li-hung-Sing is as false as the idea that slavery is good for the slaves because they are fed. Secondly, the information supplied by Government is public, and that desired and acquired by private traders is usually secret or at least private to each; but Government cannot give 'tips' to individuals without renouncing its prestige as a communal service. The true function of Government as a source of trade information is to provide for all members of the community what it is to the interest of all to know. There is, however, no central and communal organization of commerce and industry for this purpose, and therefore a Government

office has been given the task. It is true that, in the abstract, commerce and industry *might* perform this function; but they are not at present organized as a community.[1]

A second group of functions performed by the Board of Trade may be called commercial regulation and registration. The Companies Department has to do with the registration of Companies, chiefly under the Companies' Consolidation Act of 1908. By this Act the State assures the public generally of the operation of the principle of limited liability in joint stock companies, and therefore makes it easier to raise and organize capital. As a condition, the State requires registration and a certain amount of publicity, which is organized by the Board of Trade. Without such administration there would be no public record of directors and shareholders in the tens of thousands of joint-stock companies, and there would be no certainty as to the form and manner of publishing the accounts of companies. Government is here providing some security for the general public, and maintaining a form of organization which is now regarded as essential for the development of commercial enterprise. It is not, of course, argued here that these advantages could not be provided except through Government; but it is clear that Government actually does provide advantages necessary to commerce. A similar function is performed by the Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade; and the registration of patents and trade-marks is another function of the same kind. The most important point about all such services is that they are 'economic' within the structure of the industrial system, and not external interferences. The Board of Trade, then, makes more complete our present organization for producing and distributing goods.

A third group of Board of Trade functions is that under the Marine Department. Here, again, Government is economic. The regulations affecting the mercantile

[1] For the fuller development of this argument, see my *Government and Industry* (Allen & Unwin).

marine cover the ship's structure, the cargo and passengers, and the crew ; and of course, like all regulations, they are sometimes felt by the persons regulated to be restrictive of their liberties. To see that ships are seaworthy, that cargoes and passengers are safe, and that crews are not endangered, may be a nuisance to persons conscious that they would not do an unworthy act for pecuniary gain ; but experience has shown their necessity. Government then, in the Marine Department, is an advantage to those who go in ships and to those who entrust their goods to ships ; but is it a disadvantage to shipowners ? The answer is ' Yes,' if the shipowner is aiming at private gain at all costs to others, and ' No,' if the shipowner is primarily performing a public service. And if the shipowner subordinates his own livelihood to the needs of the community, it will be obvious to him that governmental regulation is not restrictive but promotive of enterprise, since living seamen are more useful than dead seamen, and safe cargoes increase credit.

We may now turn to the non-commercial aspects of industry. Government in the Board of Trade deals in the main with finance and material,[1] and not with the personal or human problems which arise in industry ; for the conditions of labour and the organization of employment are matters within the purview of the Factory Department and the Ministry of Labour.

The Factory Department of the Home Office

The Factory Department of the Home Office has in the past been regarded as the embodiment of interference. In the days when the mill-owners of the North of England used to buy ' prentice ' children at the age of seven from the Poor Law Guardians, in order to build up by their unregulated labour the export of cotton goods and the wealth of ' England,' it horrified the

[1] This distinction is not absolute, since in the Marine Department and in the newly formed Mines Department the Board of Trade deals with ' labour ' in two industries.

economists that the State should interfere. But other ideas prevailed, and the 'liberties' of employers were restricted by a succession of Factory Acts. The Act of 1833, which first established the factory inspectorate, showed that the most moderate of laws are useless unless there is an administrative machinery for securing obedience to them. The Department which was set up was an organization for the prevention of crime in the treatment of women and children, and was naturally, therefore, a sub-department of the Home Office. Since then the system of factory inspection has developed, the hostility to interference has died down, and now the positions and functions of factory inspectors are generally approved. The organization is centralized in Whitehall; the officers, men and women, are employed partly indeed in keeping industrial practices up to a certain very moderate social standard, embodied in various Acts, but partly also in the actual promotion of new and better practices of welfare, safety, and sanitation. The Acts embodying the social standard are such as the consolidating Factory Act of 1901, the Police, Factories, etc., Act of 1917, the Shops Act, the Employment of Children Act, 1903, and the rest. The administration, still very much under-staffed, is applying these standards to practice; and it can hardly be said that this is interference, because not only are the regulations designed for the greater liberty of women and children, but industry itself is improved by the greater safety and better health of workers.[1] Thus once again Government, by its economic activities in the Factory Department, promotes organization for the benefit of the whole community within the industrial system; but the chief part in the personal problems of industry is now played by the Ministry of Labour, to which it has been suggested that the Factory Department should be transferred.

[1] Cf. Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories for 1918, on the increase in productivity due to improved methods of regulating work.

The Ministry of Labour

The Ministry of Labour was established in 1917, but the functions performed by it are not new, for the Ministry took over from the Board of Trade the governmental treatment of the most prominent of 'labour' problems. The reasons for the establishment of a special department to deal with such problems were probably as follows: it was felt that the more personal issues involved in industrial employment were distinct in kind from the problems of material supply and commercial organization, with which the Board of Trade was primarily concerned; and again, the accumulation of functions relating to industry under one department was felt to cause administrative delay and confusion. Therefore the New Ministries and Secretaries Act of 1916 transferred to the new Ministry of Labour from the Board of Trade the functions relating to (*a*) Conciliation and Arbitration, (*b*) Labour Exchanges and Unemployment Insurance, and (*c*) Trade Boards. At a later date the Board of Trade Department of Labour Statistics was also transferred. At the time of the birth of the new Ministry the 'Whitley' Committee, of the now defunct Reconstruction Committee and Ministry, had reported on a plan for improving the relations of employers and employed; and the War Cabinet approved of the plan. The new Ministry of Labour was, therefore, given the additional function of supporting that plan by promoting the formation of Joint Industrial Councils. The whole of the work, then, of the Ministry of Labour concerns employment as contrasted with the commercial and financial aspects of industry; but it will be useful to review briefly in detail the work done before stating any conclusion with regard to the relation of Government to industry in this matter.

In offering facilities for conciliation and arbitration in view of industrial disputes, Government assists in keeping the system going by which we get our boots and clothes; but Government in Great Britain does not

compel the parties in an industrial dispute either to come to arbitration or to accept the award of an arbitrator. It merely adds to or supplements the organization of voluntary bodies of employers and employed for arranging their own disputes; for there were, when Government first acted in the matter, and there are still, many non-governmental Conciliation Boards and other organizations for dealing with disputes. British industry, both on the workers' side and on the employers', has never waited for the State in order to practise the art of government in reducing chaotic tendencies to an orderly system. The action of Government, however, has increased the amount of non-governmental organization, and the governmental system has reached its latest development in the Industrial Courts Act of 1919. Under this Act, the administration of which is connected with the Ministry of Labour, the State offers (1) a Court to which appeal may be made, if the parties agree, for an award in regard to an industrial dispute, and (2) a Court of Inquiry, if asked for, in regard to facts relating to employment in any industry. This does not, of course, prevent strikes; and in this Act the State does not compel workers or employers to accept State assistance; but experience has already shown that it diminishes the number of possible strikes and considerably reduces the area of friction in the industrial world. During the first year of the working of the Industrial Courts Act, 491 awards were given, all except two of which were accepted by the parties. Again, the Court of Inquiry set up to investigate the wages and conditions of dock labour issued a recommendation which was made the basis for an arrangement between employers and workers concerned. Government, therefore, has promoted peace in industry by offering services and not by the exercise of sovereign authority.

The same principles are involved in the formation of Joint Industrial Councils. These are voluntary bodies in no sense governmental and without any statutory powers; they are formed by those Trade Unions and

Employers' Associations which choose to organize themselves as a unit representing an industry. There are already about seventy such bodies; but some of them appear to be inanimate if not already defunct. Naturally the constitutions and the policies of Joint Industrial Councils vary; but nearly all of them have resulted in agreements as to wages, conditions, and other industrial matters, which otherwise might easily have become occasions for disputes. Government meanwhile has stood by, offering information and opportunities for meeting and discussions, and, when a Joint Industrial Council is formed which represents the majority engaged in any industry, offering to recognize such a body as the 'voice' of the industry.

A rather different principle is involved in the establishment of Trade Boards; for a Trade Board, unlike a Joint Industrial Council, is a governmental body with statutory powers. The public sympathy, excited in the early years of the twentieth century for 'sweated' workers, led to the passing of the first Trade Boards Act in 1909. This Act established Trade Boards in four trades in which the wages involved what was then called 'sweating.'[1] A Trade Board is a body composed of (*a*) representatives of employers in the trade, (*b*) representatives of workers in the trade, and (*c*) persons nominated by the Government. The Trade Board fixes minimum rates of wages, and an Order is then issued by the Minister of Labour making it obligatory on all employers in the trade to pay at least these rates. Prosecution and punishment by fine would follow any infringement of such an Order. Thus the State here does not simply stand by to assist, but, as it were, enters into certain sections of the industrial world with its full power and authority.

A new Trade Boards Act was passed in 1918, considerably extending the scope of Trade Boards, and facilitating their formation and the issue of Orders. The experience,

[1] These were (1) certain branches of tailoring, (2) card-board box-making, (3) lace finishing, and (4) certain branches of chain-making.

therefore, of the first Trade Boards Act may be said to have proved the method useful; and there are now sixty-four Trade Boards, which affect not only what used to be called 'sweated' trades, but also the less-well-paid sections of large industries. The effects of governmental action in this matter have been: (*a*) the improvement of the organization of the workers in the trades dealt with, (*b*) the raising of the wages in these trades, (*c*) the development of better organization by employers in the trades.[1] It might, in the abstract, have been possible for non-governmental bodies to cause these improvements, but the fact is that workers were degraded and trades made parasitic until Government took action. The gloomy forebodings of those who opposed the fixing of minimum rates, on the ground that it would destroy the trades affected, have not proved true, and, therefore, Government has not interfered with but has promoted the organization of industry.

A still more interesting example of government in the economic sphere is to be found in the functions of the Ministry of Labour in regard to employment and unemployment. Employment Exchanges, then called Labour Exchanges, were established by the Act of 1909. They are offices, forming in Great Britain a national system covering the whole country, at which workers may find out what work is available and employers may find workers. Of course, if there is no suitable work or if there are no suitable workers, the Exchanges cannot create them; and, of course, if either work or workers are lacking, it may be that the Employment Exchange system is an expensive method of searching for what is not there; but it seems reasonable to believe that some method would have to be organized in an industrial country by which knowledge of work to be done and of workers unemployed could be made available. Advertisements in newspapers, tramping about in search of work, and informal conversations of foremen and trade

[1] R. H. Tawney, *Minimum Rates in the Tailoring Trade.* Bell, 1915.

union officials are primitive methods of organizing the available industrial army, and are in fact very much more wasteful and expensive than are Employment Exchanges. Here again, however, it may be said that, although the task must be performed, Government should not perform it. In the abstract it may be possible for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations to organize an Employment Exchange system; but in the actual world Trade Unions would have to disagree less frequently and Employers' Associations would have to contain fewer trade rivals before any single and comprehensive system could be controlled and administered by them. In any case, Government at present supplies in the Employment Exchanges what is an industrial service for the assistance of the whole community. The same is true of the system of Unemployment Insurance under the new Act of 1920. The earlier Act, the National Insurance Act, Part II, of 1911, covered only about two and a half million workers out of a possible sixteen million; but the new Act now partially insures against unemployment most workers, except those in agriculture and in domestic service. The new Act further allows for special schemes by which any industries may provide for their own unemployed, independently of but in connexion with the governmental scheme. The Act is administered by the Employment Department of the Ministry of Labour; and it is worth while to consider what this means that Whitehall and its 'bureaucrats' are doing.

Unemployment is now recognized to be a normal phenomenon of the industrial system, due to fluctuations of trade or season, or to maldistribution of work. The unemployed, therefore, are not merely persons who suffer distress while they earn no wages, but are a *reserve* of the industrial army, waiting in 'slack' periods to be called up in times of pressure. But the reserve of an army must be maintained in efficiency while not actually in the trenches, and therefore unemployment insurance funds are for the maintenance of an industrial reserve. This reserve, however, is useful not to any one industry taken

separately, but to the whole economic community ; and Whitehall in the unemployment insurance system is therefore performing an industrial function for the sake of the whole community. No doubt the function might be better organized and the system could be improved, both in the raising and in the disbursement of the funds ; but, even as it is, the system is an advance on the chaotic creation of distress by unemployment, varied as it was until the twentieth century by sporadic and not altogether kindly exhibitions of deterrent ' charity.'

In regard to unemployment, as in regard to wages and disputes, it should be noted that Government is not alone in the field. The Trade Unions paid out funds in unemployment benefit long before the State acted in the matter ; and governmental action has always taken account of Trade Union action and sought their assistance in administering State funds. It seems, therefore, that Government is part of an organization of industry, of which the other parts are voluntary bodies ; and this is what has been indicated above in regard to conciliation and wages agreements.

Viewed as a whole, then, the Ministry of Labour is an office, not for the control of employment, but for the further organization, in co-operation with non-governmental bodies, of the relations between employers and workers. Restrictive regulations are indeed enforced, as in the cases of Trade Board Orders ; but the whole tendency of British Government in regard to the personal problems of industry is to promote and supplement the activities of voluntary groups rather than to substitute for them the authority of the sovereign state.

Besides the departments performing general economic functions in regard to many industries, there are some special departments, each affecting one particular industry or occupation. These are the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry of Transport. What, then, are their functions ?

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

The Ministry of Agriculture administers a mass of Acts relating to land, farming, fishing, and generally to the production of food-supplies. The original purpose of the Board, which preceded the present Ministry, seems to have been the giving of governmental assistance by way of advice and information to the agriculturists, and, when the Fisheries Department was added, to those engaged in the fishing trades. That these occupations should have a special governmental care is partly historical accident, partly a sign of the peculiar relation of food-supply to government.

In 1917 under the Corn Production Act a new step was made by the establishment of a Central Agricultural Wages Board and District Boards, representing agricultural workers as well as employers; but this policy was reversed in June 1921. The Ministry, however, may be conceived to be an organization for the advancement of agriculture and fisheries as services of the community. Its action is interference only if it is interference to secure that the interest of the community is considered. An exceedingly important addition to the administrative system under the Ministry of Agriculture Act of 1919 is that committees and a council of representatives and expert persons are attached to the administration to assist and advise it. The idea implied, although long familiar abroad and occasionally used in Great Britain hitherto, may cause interesting developments; for it means that, if effective, it will bridge the gulf which used to separate the official from the specialist in a trade or occupation.

The ordinary work of the officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is organized in a Finance, a Land and Supplies Department, and an Intelligence Department. There are, of course, other sub-departments, but the work of these three will indicate the functions of the Ministry in regard to agriculture. The Finance branch has to deal with claims for compensation

for animals slaughtered in order to prevent the spread of disease, and with expenses for agricultural education and research. The Land and Supplies Department deals with the supply of fertilizers and seeds, and administration in regard to small-holdings, and in regard to tithes, commons, and copyhold. The Intelligence Department deals with the issue of Orders in regard to diseases of animals. It has technical sub-departments for veterinary work, for education and research in regard to plant diseases, animals, and dairying, and the destruction of rats.

The Fisheries Department, besides collecting statistics and presenting annual reports to Parliament in regard to fisheries, has to co-ordinate the action of local fisheries committees, make Orders for the regulation of fisheries, and assist by insurance and other means the use of fishing vessels. It has also to supervise investigations in connexion with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea.

The Ministry of Transport

The Ministry of Transport is a more tentative experiment in government affecting a particular industry. It is the descendant, dutiful or profligate as you like it, of the Railway Department of the Board of Trade and the Railway Executive of war-time. The Act of 1919, which created it, defines its functions. British railways are certainly not nationalized, but in all the Acts regarding railways and in the governmental action at the outbreak of war and throughout the war period it is implied that the relations of Government and railway transport are peculiar and intimate. The co-ordination of railway services during the war resulted in a situation which seemed to necessitate the continuance of some kind of co-ordination, and it is for co-ordination of transport services generally that the Ministry seems to have been designed.[1] Further, the officials of one of its departments

[1] *B. of T. Journal*, March 25, 1920.

are concerned with the improvement and expansion of transport facilities, such as light railways, docks, harbours, canals, and roads. There is a Finance Department which deals with questions of fares, rates, and charges. The old powers of the Board of Trade in regard to public safety are exercised by another department, and the powers of the Road Board are exercised by the Roads Department of the new Ministry. In connexion with the Ministry are the Electricity Commissioners appointed by the Minister of Transport for carrying out some of the recommendations in regard to electrical power suggested by the Coal Conservation Committee and other committees of the late Ministry of Reconstruction.

Thus in the 'economic' sphere, affecting directly the supply and distribution of goods, there are (1) departments with very general functions covering common ground in many different industrial services, and (2) specialist departments with functions restricted in each case to one type of service—as, for example, agriculture, fisheries, and transport. The officials of all these 'economic' departments perform functions which are essential to the existing economic system, and in their activities may be found the first beginnings of a new economic system in which industry is regarded as the public service of the community.

CHAPTER VI

HEALTH AND EDUCATION

In *Erewhon* Samuel Butler describes a government which treats what we call disease as we treat what we call crime; and although many individualists still regard such a possibility with regret, the majority now recognize that health and sickness are matters which concern the community. Since diseases spread by contagion, it is to the interest of every man that his neighbours should

be healthy, and it is in the interest of all that the material conditions of life should promote health and that no citizen should harbour the enemies of the human race—bacteria. Again, 'the man who can see any difference between a body and a soul has neither,' and it is equally evident that ignorance is an obstacle to the life of a community. Education, therefore, is every one's business, and each man gains from the increase of the knowledge of his fellows. Hence, in course of time, Government comes to concern itself with health and education.

The Ministry of Health

The older of the two offices which formed the basis for the structure of the new Ministry of Health was the Local Government Board; and some of its functions in regard to Local Government are still performed by the new Ministry. The old Local Government Board was a triumph of confusion of functions: it was established by an Act of 1871, and dealt, among other things, with steam-whistles and the registration of electors, with piers and motor-cars and the distresses of unemployed workmen. But even this confusion of functions was a simplification of what existed before 1871. The Local Government Board began an administrative task which gradually led to the consolidation and amendment of the laws relating to public health. The Poor Law system was supervised by the officials of the old Local Government Board; and the action of these officials was of assistance in promoting the formation of the new Local Government units under the Acts of 1888 and 1894. Meantime the interest in problems of health and the conditions of health was growing, and a series of Acts was passed culminating in the National Insurance Act (Part I, Health) of 1911. The administration, however, of the new Act was placed under Commissioners, whose action was not related to that of the Local Government Board or the local authorities in regard to the prevention of disease.

For various reasons at the end of the war the need

was felt for supervising more closely the health of the people as a whole, and therefore from one centre ; and finally on July 1, 1919, the Ministry of Health came into existence, and the Local Government Board together with the Insurance Commissioners ceased to exist. This naturally involved a redistribution among the departments of the central government of the functions relating to health and of those relating to local government. The new Ministry took over the powers of the Insurance Commissioners and those of the Privy Council relating to midwives. It also took over the powers of the Board of Education in regard to the health of mothers and young children, and part of the medical inspections and treatment of children. In May 1920, it took over the powers of the Home Office in regard to anatomy, lunacy, and mental deficiency. On the other hand, the new Ministry transferred at the same date to the Board of Education the functions of the old Local Government Board in regard to public libraries and museums, and it transferred to the Ministry of Transport some powers of the Local Government Board in regard to municipal electrical transport. The process of redistribution shows how the tasks of the different departments of Government are conceived ; for the tendency is to make of the Ministry of Health not a ' political ' office for registration, by-laws, and co-ordination of local administrative units, but a ' cultural ' office ' conducive to the health of the people as a whole.' [1]

Certain functions unconnected with health were performed by the Ministry of Health because the Local Government Board once had them—for example, the organizing of electoral registration (a function now transferred to the Home Office), and the supervision of local taxation and audit of local expenditure (more properly belonging to the Treasury). The work of the officers of the Ministry for the promotion of health is arranged as follows. One section deals with the co-

[1] Cmd. 413, 1919, for history; Cmd. 923, 1920; Cmd. 978, 1920, for present structure of the Ministry.

ordination of local sanitary authorities; another with maternity and child welfare; another with infectious diseases and tuberculosis; another with general practitioner services under the Health Insurance Acts; another with regulations as to the sale of food and drugs, including the inspection of slaughter-houses and of places where food is prepared. These all work at problems directly affecting health, but the conditions of health are now seen to involve housing and town-planning and, therefore, there is another section of the Ministry working at the production of houses (according to rumour, not very effectively), and another dealing with town-planning, and the clearance of slums. The work of the office involves, besides ordinary administration, some technical skill; for the knowledge of the necessary conditions of health can only be developed by special training and continual expert investigation; and therefore attached to the Ministry of Health are an expert medical staff and a technical staff for housing.

It has already been explained that an administrative office is given its tasks by Acts of Parliament; and much of the work done at the Ministry of Health is obviously concerned with the supervision established under Health and Housing Acts and with the enforcement of regulations. But it is now generally understood that 'prevention is better than cure,' and therefore the activities of Government in regard to health are not merely the carrying out of orders, but also the collecting and using of information which may prevent disease and positively promote health.

Thus consular agents from all parts of the world inform the Ministry of Health of infectious disease or epidemics abroad; and the Ministry is in close touch with the International Office of Public Health, whose chief purpose is the collecting and publishing of information. Indeed, the promotion of the necessary conditions of health and the prevention of disease involve not only action by the central government, but joint action by all the governments of the world. From this point of

view the officials of the Ministry of Health form part of an international administration.

On the other hand, the conditions of healthy development must be considered locally. Supervision from the centre of a large population would not be close enough to daily life, and therefore the department of central government dealing with sanitation and housing supervised from the beginning some of the work of local authorities. Many of the most important functions of local authorities have to do with the conditions of health, and for that reason, not because they are 'local' but because they are 'health' activities of government, they are co-ordinated by the Ministry. The functions of local authorities like those of central government are various, and only in so far as they affect the conditions of health should they now come under the supervision of what was once the Local Government Board and now is a functional Ministry.[1]

The Board of Education

The Board of Education is the result of a long development in which each step has been tentative. A grant was made in 1830 in aid of voluntary schools providing elementary education, and this grant was administered by the Treasury; but in 1839 an increased annual grant was given which was to be administered by a Committee of the Privy Council. An Act of 1859 appointed a Vice-President of this Committee whose duties were much extended when compulsory education was established in 1870. The administrative tradition in regard to education begins with the office of the Vice-President in 1839.

In 1899, by the Board of Education Act, the Whitehall officials dealing with elementary education were united with the South Kensington officials dealing with classes

[1] For the principle of distinguishing offices in accordance with functions and not in accordance with distinctions of persons dealt with, see the Report of the Committee on the Machinery of Government. Cd. 9230.

in science and art in many different kinds of institutions. The offices of the present Board are divided into two departments, one dealing with England, the other with Wales. In addition to the branches dealing with elementary, secondary, technical, and university education, there is a medical branch for carrying out provisions of the Acts of 1906 and 1907. The officials, like those of the Ministry of Health, do not substitute central government for local government, but only supervise and co-ordinate the activities of local authorities in regard to education. A very important function of the Education Office is performed by its office of Special Inquiries and Reports. The officials in this department collect and put upon record information on all educational matters both British and foreign, and they publish reports upon educational organizations and experiments of all countries. The officials also assist foreign visitors inquiring into British education, and provide special information for British inquirers going abroad.

Further, the officials of the Whitehall office are kept in close touch with educational experience all over the country by the fact that the Chief Inspectors of elementary, secondary, and technological education work in the office in connexion with the heads of the departments.

Apart from the direction of policy by the Ministry and the great influence upon the educational system which can be exerted by the Permanent Secretary and the higher branches of the Inspectorate, the work of the administrative officials is an important part of government. They have to compare the provisions made by different local educational authorities, call attention to any defect in the carrying out of Acts or Regulations, and thus make homogeneous the system of education operating over the whole of England. They have also to compare new schemes with established tradition, to draw attention to dangers, or to incite by comparison. Further, the central government gives grants to local authorities, and these must be distributed consistently and according to a definite plan ; therefore

the administrative officials have to review and compare the bases upon which grants are given. There is now in the Education Office a single Finance Department co-ordinating the system of grants in aid in regard to the different kinds of local education authorities.

In addition to supervision of schools and colleges the Board controls the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Royal College of Arts, which are regarded as educational institutions in a special sense ; and thus the Office of the Board, although in some ways like foreign Ministries of Arts and Sciences, shows how differently in England and elsewhere the function of government is conceived in regard to science and art.

The history of the connexions of 'Whitehall' with education has shown how difficult and doubtful is the action of Government in this matter ; but it is unnecessary here to discuss the principle of compulsory education and the province of the State. We must, however, attempt to explain what the officials who deal with education are actually effecting. The central government in Great Britain does not, of course, dictate the kind of subject to be taught, nor does it influence very much the mental and emotional atmosphere of the schools and the colleges. We have not in England an education designed to glorify the State or to diminish the humanity of the new generation by inculcating any doctrine of citizenship. The central administration seems still to confine its action to externals and school 'conditions' ; and it goes further only in the suggestion of new methods and the levelling up of teaching which would generally be regarded as defective in method.

Again, the Board, through its inspectors and its officials in London, seems to be co-ordinating local organization and voluntary efforts rather than substituting for them anything else. Co-ordination is not control, nor does it necessarily involve any claim to superiority, although organizers in every sphere of life often tend to think that they are creating the forces which they organize. Thus publishers claim credit for the success of a good author,

and universities claim credit for the genius which happens to develop within them. So also, no doubt, the Board of Education offends some of those whose efforts it supervises; but in the main the function of co-ordination is skilfully performed, and every one now understands how much is gained if those who are separated by distance or circumstances while pursuing the same ends are brought into contact—even through a Government office.

CHAPTER VII

RETRENCHMENT AND REFORM

The description of Government departments which has been given above should be enough to indicate the character of the work to be done by the Civil Service. An organized society cannot dispense with Government offices, even if it has the most perfect legislature; but, of course, it does not follow that the existing system is the best possible, or that it could not be improved; and, indeed, the general prejudice against 'bureaucracy' and Government officials is based upon some bitter experience.

Two distinct kinds of criticism may be made—one that the system to which the name 'Whitehall' has been given is too expensive, the other that the officials in the system are incompetent or bureaucratic. As for the cost of Government, obviously the amount which the nation can afford to pay is a matter for complicated argument. In real life there is no such thing as 'free' service. If we want more police or judges, more postal deliveries, and more trade information, we must pay in taxes or otherwise; but it is beyond the scope of this book to discuss how the funds may be raised which we desire to expend on government. In any case, it seems absurd to say, as certain economists do, that we must think first of how much we can afford and then think of what we want done. Clearly the first point to be decided is what

government should do; for we may be able to afford much more for government which increases the production of wealth than for government which destroys it.

Cost of the Civil Service

The cost of the departments in Whitehall may be found in the Estimates for Civil Services, presented annually to Parliament. In 1914 the salaries of the Civil Service amounted to £29,500,000, and the salaries of the Civil Service in December 1918 amounted to £86,000,000.[1] The mere comparison of such sums, however, indicates very little, for many of the services now performed are different from the services of 1914; and it would be impossible, in any case, to discuss here whether these services cost too much or whether there are too many persons performing them. The purpose of the argument in this book is to show that one of the criteria, by reference to which Whitehall must be criticized, is the position which governmental administration holds in the life of the nation. We must at least understand clearly what we are paying for and what our servants are doing; for if the price we pay has increased, the variety of the functions of administration is also very much greater than it once was. Government is now expected to enter into the fields of industry and education, for example, which were practically untouched by Government some years ago.[2]

The price we pay may be excessive for two very different reasons. In the first place, the service paid for may not be needed, and, secondly, the service, although necessary in some form, may be extravagantly organized. It should be noted, however, that in both cases, and especially in the former case, the responsibility under our system rests upon the Government of the day, that

[1] The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Parliamentary Debates, H.C., December 9, 1920, col. 2506.

[2] In 1797 there were 16,267 civil servants whose salaries amounted to £1,374,861; in 1815 there were 24,598 whose salaries were £3,202,439. In 1832 the number had gone down to 21,305, costing £2,819,622.—Gretton, *King's Government*, quoting the return of 1832.

is to say upon a political party and not upon its instruments—the officials.

It is essential for the understanding of the whole subject of this book that the distinction between government in administration and 'the Government of the day,' should be appreciated by all citizens. The recent war has somewhat confused the minds of the majority; for they tend to treat as indistinguishable the policy of a particular group which holds political power and—a very different thing—the administration of government. In a sense government in the acts of administration stands for and acts in the name of the whole people. It is without prejudices and takes no sides. It is a third party in disputes, as a judge is in a court. To government in this sense belong the acts of civil servants, in so far as they carry out agreed policy. They are 'the State' in the same way as the men in the Army and Navy are 'the State,' although the action and allegiance of civil servants are by no means military. The members of the permanent 'Services' remain the same, although subordinate, whatever political group holds power, as the hand of a man is the same even when his mind changes.

'The Government of the day,' however, cannot pretend to represent in the same way the whole people, unless there is no opposition from any group, however small, to the policy for which they stand. In any case the devising of a policy is very different from its application; and responsibility for the cost of its application necessarily rests upon the shoulders of those who devise it or support it. Not government, therefore, but 'the Government' must be blamed if Whitehall is too expensive. This is sufficiently obvious in purely political issues. No one assumes that civil servants are to blame if a particular tax is enforced or if women are put upon juries. The confusion, however, of government with 'the Government' is common in regard to industrial issues. Government, as it has been shown above, has entered into the industrial system more completely in recent years; and perhaps because the change is recent, it is not yet gene-

rally understood that industrial policy is distinct from industrial administration, just as 'political' policy is distinct from political administration. In regard to industry, commerce, and finance, therefore, government in the acts of civil servants is an unprejudiced third party or the expression of agreed policy; but 'the Government' which gives the decisions of the group holding control is by no means 'the whole people.' It is not an unprejudiced third party, and it is not the expression of an unopposed policy. Thus, in the administration of Employment Exchanges, government is the action of the whole people through its agents; but in the settling of industrial disputes or in the adoption of a policy to deal with unemployment, 'the Government' expresses the will of the group which is at the moment in control. The Ministry of Transport, for example, is not an organization for stopping strikes, although it may be used by a group whose industrial policy implies that strikes are wrong.

The confusion of 'the Government' with government in regard to industry arises partly from the tendency to regard the present industrial system as 'the nature of things'; for government in regard to industry certainly is concerned to maintain and develop the production and distribution of coal and food. Not government, however, but only 'the Government' decides what system shall be used for this purpose. Hence the necessity that the Ministers in control of 'economic' departments should have an industrial policy, as well as what used to be called a 'political' programme. In industrial as well as in political issues the work of the Civil Service is subordinate to the direction of these Ministers and of Parliament through them.

The services of all departments are the expressions of policy; and the cost of the policy is always, in fact, considered before the policy is decided upon by the Cabinet. The Government Actuary is asked to estimate, for example, what the cost of maternity benefit would be before any bill on this subject is drafted. It is not usual

to review all the costs of administration resulting from any change in the law; but clearly the cost of 'Whitehall' is a matter for Parliament, and the organization for controlling the cost has been already referred to above. The Public Accounts Committee, the Accounting Officer, and the debates on the Estimates are parts of this organization; and its effectiveness is obviously a subject for a book on Parliament rather than for one on the departments.

TABLE I

COST OF CERTAIN DEPARTMENTS

(Estimates, 1920–21)

SALARIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

	£
FINANCE.	
Treasury (and some subordinate departments)	313,960
Inland Revenue	4,445,380
Customs and Excise	4,091,664
Exchequer and Audit	137,400
Government Actuary	36,549
LAW AND ORDER.	
Home Office	467,950
Colonial Office	108,598
India Office	78,500
WAR AND FOREIGN.	
War Office	2,126,250
Air Ministry	877,000
Admiralty	1,554,000
Pensions Ministry	2,173,000
Foreign Office	201,052
Secret Service	200,000
Department of Overseas Trade	394,899
ECONOMIC SERVICES.	
Board of Trade	2,620,501
Bankruptcy Department	53,301
Mercantile Marine Services	418,840
Ministry of Labour	3,872,035
Ministry of Agriculture	4,099,862
Ministry of Transport	419,571
Office of Works	477,500
Stationery and Printing	4,844,104
HEALTH AND EDUCATION.	
Ministry of Health	1,344,477
Board of Education	376,148

TABLE II

HEADQUARTERS STAFFS OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

December 1, 1920, *from Cmd.* 1109 (1920)

	Permanent.			Temporary.			Total.		
	Men.	Women.	Both Sexes.	Men.	Women.	Both Sexes.	Men.	Women.	Both Sexes.
Post Office	4,319	5,593	9,912	626	2,708	3,334	4,945	8,301	13,246
Inland Revenue	1,402	156	1,558	569	786	1,355	1,971	942	2,913
Customs and Excise	845	50	895	294	205	499	1,139	255	1,394
Admiralty	2,411	104	2,515	2,135	1,560	3,695	4,546	1,664	6,210
Air Ministry	757	39	796	1,105	519	1,624	1,862	558	2,420
War Office	1,379	126	1,505	2,940	1,304	4,244	4,319	1,430	5,749
Pensions Ministry	172	33	205	1,519	7,979	9,498	1,691	8,012	9,703
Health Ministry	1,241	767	2,008	1,046	1,685	2,731	2,287	2,452	4,739
Trade, Board of (including Mines and Bankruptcy Departments)	1,092	53	1,145	1,937	884	2,821	3,029	937	3,966
Labour Ministry	665	111	776	1,179	1,119	2,298	1,844	1,230	3,074
Munitions Ministry	114	3	117	1,845	1,006	2,851	1,959	1,009	2,968
Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of (including Ordnance Survey of United Kingdom, and Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew)	463	23	486	423	478	901	886	501	1,387
Food Ministry	35	10	45	890	779	1,669	925	789	1,714
Other Departments	10,428	2,070	12,498	5,290	4,253	9,543	15,718	6,323	22,041
Totals	25,323	9,138	34,461	21,798	25,265	47,063	47,121	34,403	81,524

Industrial Staffs are excluded throughout.

Temporary Staff includes Temporary Officers employed in

Competence

With regard to the second problem, the competence of civil servants, it is essential to conceive the State not as an authority but as a service. The myth that civil servants are incompetent is probably a survival from days when a Commission reported that 'those whose abilities do not warrant an expectation that they will succeed in the open professions and those whom indolence of temperament or physical infirmities unfit for active exertions are placed in the Civil Service, where they may obtain an honourable livelihood with little labour and no risk.' That was written in 1853; and in 1860 a Select Committee reported that in the office of the Registrar-General 'a great number of those appointed were very objectionable on account of age, on account of the broken state of their health, and on account of their bad character and want of proper qualifications.' [1] Efforts were then made to grant posts only after competitive examination; and various confused attempts were made between 1855, when the Civil Service Commission was established, and 1874, when the Playfair Commission, a body of civil servants, established the existing division of the classes (administrative and clerical) in the service. The principle that the Civil Service should be recruited by open competitive examination is now applied in almost all branches of the Service. The type of civil servant, therefore, is no longer what it was in 1853 and 1860; and if officials are still incompetent, it must be either because the test is wrong or because having entered the Service they develop incompetence. The latter may be the truth, if there is no pressure to do active work or no fear of the results of inactivity. Therefore the problems of security of tenure and retirement are fundamental for the efficiency of the Civil Service. Civil servants, when first appointed, are in theory on probation; but this has not often been used to eject

[1] Report of Royal Commission on the Civil Service, Cd. 7338, 1914; quoting on p. 151, from the earlier Reports.

the incompetent; other methods are the abolition of the office held by an incompetent officer or the theory of ill-health. Exchange to another department sometimes improves efficiency, and, finally, promotion may remove the incompetent. It is generally agreed that there should be some better method than promotion to a higher post for removing the incompetent civil servant from the post he occupies. It is also agreed, although not so generally, that it should be easier than it now is to give an official a pension before he has served his full time if his usefulness is doubtful. Any incompetence in the Civil Service can then be removed—to be placed elsewhere! But it is also possible to improve the competence of officials while in office.[1] It is now recognized that administration is better if the administrator knows something of those parts of the outer non-governmental world which are affected by his administrative action. Therefore lectures and other methods of education for the Civil Service have been organized in some Departments. These lectures and studies should obviously include a reference to the sections of life which any particular office affects, but should also include a general view of character of government and especially of that part of government which is called administration; and what government really is will probably be understood better by the governed than by the members of the Civil Services who are the instruments of government. The patient may not be an expert, but he knows better than the doctor whether or not the medicine is killing him. On the other hand, the methods of administration, although in general similar for all large organizations, are largely of a special character when they are governmental. In regard to these, therefore, the Civil Service must improve its own competence. New tasks are being continually

[1] The creation of a special Establishment Branch in the Treasury and the improvement of the Establishment Branches in the Departments, as well as the closer contact of the Treasury and the other Departments, are methods for increasing competence, suggested by the Treasury Committee on Staffs.—Cmd. 62, 1919, para. 15 sq.

given to the Civil Service, even apart from the peculiar tasks of the war period; and the old methods will not suit the new situation either inside or outside the Government departments. Indeed, even for the old tasks, the old methods could be improved. The tradition of a department serves as a sort of official memory uniting the experience of many men and sometimes many generations of men. This tradition is not to be despised. The fixity of a routine is also useful, and what to the outsider seems to be 'red tape' and 'circumlocution,' if it means the filing of documents, the 'minuting of papers' and the use of traditional phrases for correspondence, may often save more time in the end than the irresponsible rapidity of private enterprise. On the other hand, the past does not contain all wisdom, and particularly in methods of government we have much to learn. Government, for example, coming more closely into touch with industry or with education, should develop quite new methods and attitudes. Again, routine should allow of a sense of proportion—a small matter is still small even though it be the concern of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury.

Reform by Civil Servants

The Civil Service is, however, already setting itself to develop its own competence. Members of the Service have formed the Society of Civil Servants, which arranges lectures and uses other methods by which the experience of the different departments and the different ranks can be shared. The methods of administration thus receive special attention and criticism, and improvement from within becomes more possible. The result may be a formation and development of new methods and new ideals.[1]

Again, the establishment of a Joint Industrial Council for the Civil Service marks a new stage. The various

[1] Cf. *The Civil Servant and His Profession:* lecture by E. F. Wise, see bibliography at the end of this book.

ranks and sections of the Service are thus brought into close relations and probably will learn to see themselves all as parts of a single organism of government. The Civil Service as a whole, in this Joint Industrial Council, is contrasted with, and is in relation to, a small body of higher officials who, for this purpose, represent the 'employers,' or the public at large, or the Treasury as the paymaster. Thus the functions of governmental administration are felt to be merely some among the many social functions which are performed. Civil servants are employees or 'workers' like other workers. They have no special sacredness or dignity in serving the State, since the State is only one among the many devices of the community for organizing the supply of its needs.

On the other hand, since in this Industrial Council civil servants are given power to criticize the conditions of their employment and to improve the organization of which they form part, they are undertaking the responsibility of correcting for themselves many of the faults in administration of which they know the general public complains.

Bureaucracy

So far we have been considering the danger that Whitehall may be incompetent; but there is also a danger that Whitehall may be too independent. A further criticism, therefore, made against Whitehall is that it is bureaucratic, in the sense of the word which implies that officials control the life of the nation. The expert may be a superior person; but the powers we give to an expert need to be carefully considered. Quite apart, however, from the recent increase in the power of the Executive and the loss of control by Parliament, which is perhaps temporary and in great part due to the war, administrative officials also are clearly increasing their power. The power of the superior officers in a department is known to be very great. First, in the carrying out of established policy, many acts are done

every day which themselves involve a policy. Apart, therefore, from the general directions given by Parliament, daily 'working' directions must also be given; but these the political head of a department may not be able to give, either because he has no time or because he is naturally not concerned personally with all the details in the working of the department. The permanent official, however, is an expert, and therefore he tends to shape the day-to-day policy of the administration. Secondly, in devising new policy, which may take the form of Bills to be put before Parliament, the permanent official is also powerful. Ministers may receive vague indications of policy from their party or from Parliament; but the material to serve as basis for a draft Bill has to be provided by officials in the department concerned, and the actual drafting of legislation is a complicated and delicate task, performed by the officials of a specialist department.[1] Only an expert can fit the new policy into the old administration; and the permanent official may often have to suggest to the political Minister what can and what cannot be done, as well as how to do what can be done. Thus new policy is very often the actual product, and still more often the result of corrections and suggestions, of the permanent civil servants.

Apart from large measures of policy or important administrative decisions, which are influenced by the superior officials, there are many less important decisions and even some elements of policy which are influenced by the lower ranks of the Civil Service. In a large department responsibility must be delegated; and this involves giving some control over public policy to subordinate civil servants. The bare necessities of the great State of modern times have, therefore, led to the partial control of public policy by administrative officials, and this is called 'bureaucracy'; for it involves that the persons actually in control of public policy are not elected and not 'responsible' in the sense of being removable at the will of the governed. They are experts, in per-

1 The office of the Parliamentary Counsel, under the Treasury.

manent if only partial control. Thus we may be governed for our good, but our own views of what is good may be entirely disregarded by persons claiming to 'know better.' This may be no worse than what is called Parliamentary government; but it certainly results in the domination of the official mind, a domination which is resented everywhere and has been especially felt in the control of British Colonies and Dominions. A speaker in the Assembly in Victoria, afterwards Chief Justice of Victoria, is reported to have said: 'It might be said with perfect truth that the million and a half of Englishmen who inhabit these colonies (Australia) and who during the last fifteen years have believed that they possessed self-government, have been really governed during the whole of that time by a person named Rogers.' This was Sir Frederick Rogers, afterwards Lord Blachford, permanent Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office from 1860 to 1871.[1]

Questions and Administration

The traditional British method by which the governed can exercise some control over the daily acts of the administrative departments is the practice of 'Questions' in Parliament. All acts done in the name of the State are liable to full publicity and criticism. Redress of wrong done or the correction of mistakes may sometimes be achieved by a skilful question in Parliament; and undoubtedly this function of Parliament is as important, if not more important, than legislation.

The method, however, is crude and largely ineffectual. First, the questions are answered by the political heads of departments, but the answers are formulated by the permanent officials; and it is very difficult for the ordinary Member of Parliament to secure information if the answers prepared by experts tend to obscure the

[1] Quoted by Lowell, *Government of England*, vol. i, p. 180. Cf. Graham Wallas, *The Great Society*, p. 168 sq., for the contrast between the official mind of the higher officers in the Civil Service and the 'mind' of Parliament.

issue. The work of constructing answers to Parliamentary questions has already become a fine art in the departments. Secondly, even if the officials are willing and eager to tell the whole truth, the questioner is often at a disadvantage because he does not know enough to frame an effective question. Blocking on the part of the political heads of departments also has become a sort of game by which they secure themselves from criticism. Thirdly, even if questions are most skilful, they more usually arise after the administration has acted ; and we have no method by which to control the day-to-day policy of a department before it is formed. It is outside the scope of this book to devise new methods of control of administration, but it may be suggested that a new type of political chief for a department would transform the whole situation. It may be in the future that to be ' in politics ' may mean to be a capable administrator or a skilled negotiator, or a guide and initiator, and not a mere collector of votes. Some Ministers, even under the present system, have skill and capacity for office ; but they are not, of course, elected as administrators, and some of them think more of what will attract votes than of what will make government efficient.

Another possible danger of bureaucracy is in the issue of Statutory Rules and Orders ; for although the Minister of a department is technically responsible for these, the administrative officials may increase their power in defining the terms of this secondary legislation. The control by Parliament over the issue of Rules and Orders has been described above ; but obviously little or no attention is usually paid by Members of Parliament to the terms of the Orders, and the mere quantity of modern legislation is making it more and more impossible for Parliament to consider the details of the application of a Statute in subsidiary Rules issued by the departments. Hence, power of an almost legislative kind may fall into the hands of a permanent Civil Service.

Devolution and decentralization would solve some of the difficulties which are due to the fact that Parliament

has neither time nor ability to deal with details; and devolution of legislation would naturally be accompanied by decentralization of administration. Indeed, a decentralized administration may be even more necessary than devolution of the legislature, and may actually precede it; but this has been hardly considered. Many of the acts of Whitehall which are felt to be high-handed or bureaucratic are the effects of a highly centralized administration, and some of these effects could be avoided by a certain amount of delegation of authority to local officials.

Without going so far, however, as devolution, it may be possible to diminish the aloofness of Whitehall, and to give its officials a more concrete knowledge of the details which have to be dealt with in daily policy and Statutory Orders, if some system of interchange could be devised, to transfer for stated periods some of the officials in Whitehall to the offices of local authorities and *vice versa*. Those departments which supervise local authorities would probably be improved by the closer contact with local conditions. A similar principle might be operative in the Colonial Office and the Colonial Governments, and an interchange has been already suggested by the Royal Commission on the Civil Service in regard to the Foreign Services. Such an interchange would tend to make more flexible the official mind, and would perhaps counteract some of the evils of bureaucracy. This, however, is practicable only for those central departments which correspond with some local government administration. In other cases there might be an interchange between government departments and the non-governmental organizations affecting the same aspects of life; but this would be very difficult to arrange at present. The departments dealing with industry and trade, for example, are public services; but industry and trade are not at present organized as public services, and until that change occurs, government will appear to be in some way opposed to industrial organization.

Finally, both in order to save expense and in order to

increase efficiency, the functions of all the government departments should be reviewed comprehensively, and some of them remodelled; for these functions, as they now stand, are still in many cases wrongly distributed and imperfectly co-ordinated. The problems are not by any means solved, even in theory, by the Reports of Committees and Commissions; and, of course, the distribution of functions is still a very controversial subject. It is possible, however, to indicate some improvements, which should at least be considered, if they cannot be adopted without further discussion. The Factory Department, for example, seems to be out of place as a part of the Home Office, which should be more like a Ministry of Justice than a Ministry of the Interior, and, in any case, is not an 'economic' department. If the Factory Department is performing an economic function by improving conditions of employment, and so improving the organization of industry, it should become part of the Ministry of Labour. If, however, the department is a 'health' department, it should be a part of the Ministry of Health.

Again, employment on ships and in agriculture and in mines is supervised, not by the Ministry of Labour, but by three separate departments. There may be special reasons for this; but it tends to subordinate the problems of employment in shipping, agriculture, and mines, to the material or financial problems of these sections of industry; and it removes out of the purview of the Ministry of Labour, which is properly concerned with all forms of employment, three of the most important.

Again, the supervision of Fisheries is still combined with the supervision of Agriculture within one Ministry; and this is said to militate against the proper consideration of fisheries, because the Minister and most of the departmental officials concentrate their attention upon food production from the land. No large principle is involved however, for the problem is merely one of making administration more effective.

Finally, there might be a central department or office

under the Privy Council for political, industrial, and social intelligence. Many of the departments have their own special divisions of Intelligence and Information; but there are many problems of government which can only be dealt with comprehensively. No departmental Intelligence Division can deal with them. There is already for industry a Department of Scientific and Industrial Research; and there might be a similar department for social research.

Many other improvements in administration are possible. The position of the Post Office, for example, as a revenue department seems to be anomalous; the functions of the Stationery Office and the Office of Works need to be reconsidered. The Whitehall Offices of the Scottish and Irish governments may require some changes. All these, however, are problems too large and too controversial to be dealt with here.

The survey of the functions of government shows many instances of waste, overlapping, lack of co-ordination, or confusion of functions. Some recent efforts have, indeed, been made to improve the organization of central administration; but Whitehall is an intractable subject for reforms on a large scale, or on any plan which might imply conceiving government as a whole. The existing British system is the result of a slow and very tentative growth; and the feeling that experience has led us to the point we have reached in government has a tendency to make not only civil servants conservative. Whatever future reforms, then, may be necessary, it will probably always be true of the British system of government that it embodies a long tradition. The history of the Civil Service has, indeed, contained in the past many discreditable instances of patronage, bribery, and incompetence; but existing British administration embodies a tradition as honourable as that of any body of men. With all its faults, Whitehall stands for a conception of public service for the common good of which any nation might be proud.

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